Oakey Beginnings 1615-1827

A Time of Religious Change

By Kim Bateman

May, 2020

Dedicated to my Aunt Mary Ida Ream Burgoyne (1922-1995)

Introduction

I thought I was through writing books.

Since 2012 I've been immersed in writing three volumes on both lines of my mother's ancestors based on several thousand letters that had been handed down to her from her parents and grandparents, finishing the last of them about three months ago. It was a wonderful project, but I felt burned out. Besides, I was out of letters.

The first book, *Letters of Lace and Stones: Oakeys and Sirrines, Two Families Joined and Separated by Pioneering and Polygamy*, was on my mother's maternal line, the Oakeys and Sirrines, which I finished in 2018. The Oakey part of the book was the story of James and Mary Cooper Oakey, who joined the Mormon Church in Nottingham, England and migrated to Utah and then to Bear Lake County, Idaho. It began with the life of James' father, James Oakey Sr., who was born in the nearby town of Melbourne in Derbyshire. I did not push the story further back for several reasons, most importantly because the letter collection did not extend back that far. Also, the genealogical research prior to James Sr. was confusing to me, conflicting, and incomplete. For example, two of the children in James's family, Mary and James, had exactly the same name as two of his father's children and two of his grandfather's children. If that isn't confusing enough, all but one his father's seven children were named after his grandfather's children. And many of those duplicated relatives lived concurrently. This had introduced many errors into the family tree and frustrated me. To make matters worse, the Oakey pedigree in FamilySearch.com was different from the information handed down to me by Mary Ida Ream Burgoyne, my mother's deceased sister and the official genealogist of our family. To resolve that seemed way too complicated for my book.

After the third book was finished a few months ago I began to feel a duty to work on those Oakey problems. I started by sorting out the three generations of like-named children, and then by researching their descendants as far as I could go. Then I turned to the Oakey ancestors.

While collecting family letters for the book I obtained a box of Aunt Mary Ida's genealogy notes from her son Ed Burgoyne, from which I was able to piece together many of her ideas. I realized that her work had disappeared from the LDS church collection when all pedigrees were linked into the great shared tree in Family.search.com, and someone else's work became the official line. When I had connected her notes and tried to validate them with the many new sources that are available, I realized that she had been correct in almost every case.

Despite my best efforts, still not every connection is fully sourced--maybe they never can be. But her work has corrected many false assumptions in the Oakey pedigree in Family Search. I am amazed at the quality of the work that she did, especially without modern methods. The main reason that I am writing this story is to bring her work to light.

The second reason is to bring the tree to life for the Oakey descendants. Since I don't have family letters to use for this story, I've tried to put the dry genealogical facts into the perspective of the times and places in which the Oakey family lived by integrating pertinent history, geography, and images. I want to give the Oakey descendants the most vivid and accurate picture that I can of their beginnings. In doing so I became aware that joining the Mormon Church in 1850 was only one of several important changes in religious belief for the Oakeys as they moved from the Church of England to a series of dissenting congregations. These evolving beliefs and the political and economic changes of the times were linked to their movements from town to town. I ended up learning a ton of English history.

Finally, knowing that there are still many gaps and undocumented assumptions in this story, I am hoping that future genealogists can build on what Mary Ida and I have done. I will try to interpret and flesh out the facts that we have, but also try to frankly signal where I have made guesses and where more evidence needs to be gathered. I hope you can move it forward another step.

Kim Bateman

May, 2020

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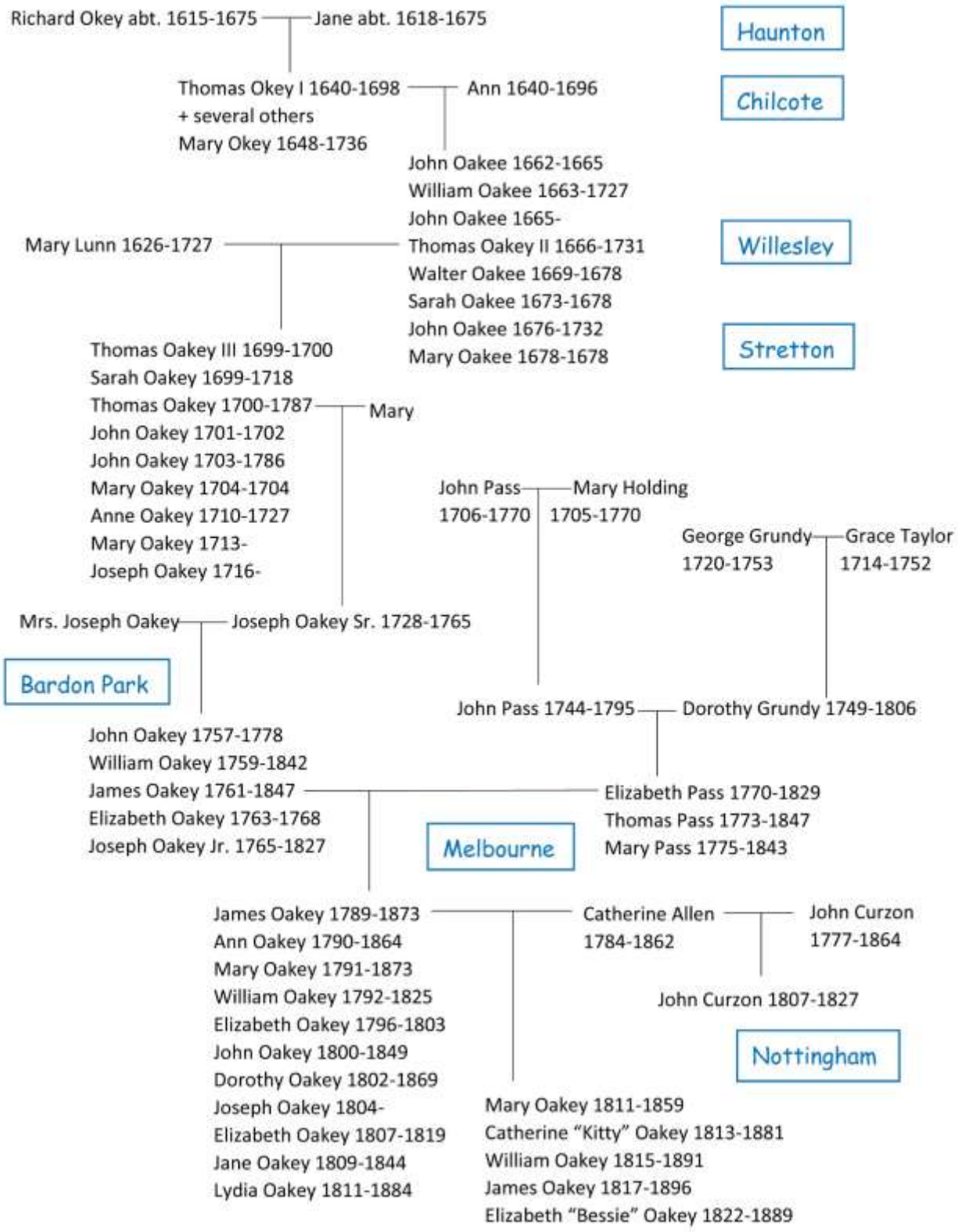
Oakey Pedigree



Chapter One – Chilcote

August 15, 1861 -- I, Thomas Oakey, am (1st child) the son of James Oakey of Melbourne, Derbyshire. He was the son of James Oakey, who was the son of Joseph Oakey and he was the son of Joseph Oakey.

That is the beginning of the diary of Tom, the older brother of my great grandmother Sarah Oakey Sirrine. His diary was a primary source, along with the Oakey family letters, for my history of his father's family.[1] Tom was absolutely correct in his statement of lineage, as far as it went. And probably no one in his family knew more than that. He would have been surprised to learn that further up his family tree the next three Oakeys were all named Thomas, just like him. They were descendants of Richard Okey, who was born while the King James Bible was being translated and Shakespeare was still writing his plays. But let's take these generations a chapter at a time.

The evidence that I have of Richard Okey consists of two entries in the records of the parish Church of St. Andrew in the village of Clifton Campbell in Derbyshire on the River Mease. Built initially in the year 1200, the church also served the surrounding villages and hamlets including Chilcote and Haunton. One entry in the church's registry states, "Richard Okey of Haunton was buried December the fourteenth (16)75." The previous page in the bound parchment book notes, "Jane Oakey the wife of Richard Okey of Haunton was buried April the seventeenth (16)75."

Clifton Campbell church of St. Andrew
By Mark Walton, CC BY-SA 2.0

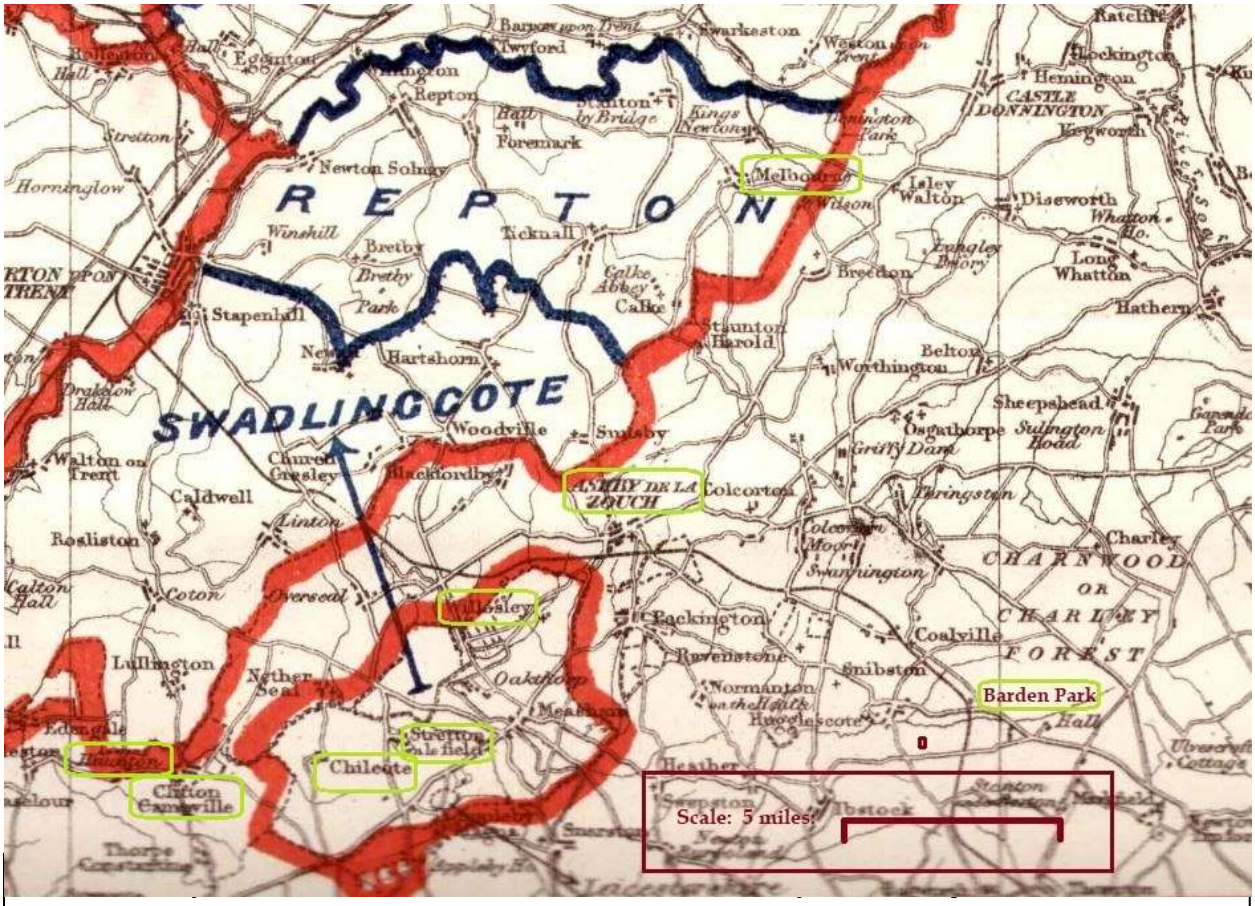
The Okeys' christenings and marriage were not mentioned in the earlier pages for a simple reason. The record book only went back to the year 1662. It seemed strange to me that the registry would begin at such a late date. The reasons for that are interesting.

After King Henry VIII left the Catholic Church to create the Church of England, his minister Thomas Cromwell formally introduced the idea of keeping parish registers when he commanded the vicar of every parish in England to record christenings, marriages, and deaths. That was in 1538, long before our story begins. Only about seven percent of the churches of that day obeyed the order, probably fearing that it would lead to additional taxes. Compliance had only increased to about 15% when his daughter, Mary Tudor, who had remained a loyal Catholic, discontinued the practice altogether in 1553. Her successor

[1] *Letters of Lace and Stones: Oakeys and Sirrines, Two Families Joined and Separated by Pioneering and Polygamy*, posted in Memories for Thomas Oakey KWJF-HRV at FamilySearch.org.

Elizabeth I, who supported the Church of England (Anglican), reinstated the practice, but registries were being kept in only about half of Anglican churches when her successor James I began his reign in 1603. By then, dissenting churches were becoming more prominent. Dissenters and other religious and political stress led to the civil war from 1643-47 under his son Charles I. During the British Civil War and the period of the Commonwealth government under Oliver Cromwell, parish registries were poorly kept and many of the old records went missing. In 1662, the Anglican parish churches were just getting back to their old practices.

Richard and Jane Okey did not live in Clifton Campbell, but in the neighboring hamlet of Haunton. They attended a small church building called a chapelry there for Sunday services, that was supervised by the vicar in Clifton, where the important rites were performed. These towns were located in what was called the Derbyshire Island, a geographic anomaly that arose around 960 A.D., a century before the Norman Invasion of England, when settlers from Derbyshire to the north crossed the borders of Staffordshire and Leicestershire to clear out a large swath of forest for farming. The island persisted until Parliament re-drew the borders nearly a millennium later in 1897, which made more sense geographically, but has frustrated historians and genealogists. The new border line



went right through the Clifton Campbell parish, assigning Haunton and Clifton to Staffordshire and Chilcote to Leicestershire.

So it is possible that no record was ever made of the christenings of the Okeys, nor of their marriage. Based on the ages of their children, I calculate that Richard and Jane were probably born sometime between 1610 and 1620, the year that the pilgrims arrived in America. They would have experienced an interesting, stressful period of English history. During the English Civil War and the beheading of King Charles they were a young married couple with at least one child, and probably several. Richard was most likely born in Haunton. It is probable that Jane was also from Haunton or elsewhere in the parish. They moved four miles to Chilcote to raise their family.

Although most of Leicestershire, especially the farmers and working class, supported Parliament, the gentry and clergy tended to support the king. The Civil War opened on the 22nd of August, 1642, with King Charles raising his standard at the castle in Nottingham, just 35 miles to the northeast of Chilcote. One of the most important battles of that war was the siege of the castle at Ashby de le Zeuch, which was just seven miles from the Okeys' house. That siege occurred near the end of the war. The castle, which was the last stronghold for the King's Royalists, was under attack for about five months during which the town of Ashby was looted and pillaged before the garrison fell in March 1646, much to the relief of the common people. Two years later, the king's supporters in the area rose up again, prompting Parliament to order the army to return and tear the castle down. Its ruins were glorified in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* in 1819 and have remained a popular tourist site to this day.

The castle ruins at Ashby de la Zouch

The baptisms of Richard and Jane Oakey's children would have been before 1662, and so no record exists for them either. We know about two of their children, Thomas and Mary, who were born respectively in about 1640 and 1648. The gap between them suggests that there were probably several others. We know of Mary only because of her marriage record, since the ceremony took place in 1668, after the registry started. The church records in Chilcote began in 1660, the year in which England reverted to a monarchy and Charles II came out of exile to assume the throne. Thomas was already married by then since a daughter named Susannah, probably his first, was registered there. I am guessing their ages based on the assumption that they were about 20 when they were married. Mary married a man named Henry Snibson according to the person who indexed the record. I stared at

the image of the record for a long time, convinced that couldn't be Snibson—maybe it was Sinbson, pronounced "Simpson." What do you think?

St. Matthews Church, Chilcote

Thomas Oakey and his wife Ann remained in Chilcote to raise their own family. They were probably married there around 1659. They had sons named John and William before 1663. 1665-6 was the last great plague in England, which killed 100,000 people in England over 18 months. London was hit the worst by the plague, and then by the great London fire. John died in February of 1665 and by the day after Christmas that year they christened another baby whom they also named John. Our ancestor, Thomas Oakey (I'll call him Thomas II from now on for clarity's sake) was born barely a year later in January 1666 followed by Walter in 1669 and Sarah in 1673.

In 1675 both Richard Oakey and his wife Jane died, just eight months apart. Jane died first and was buried at Willesley, which I think may indicate where her family lived. Richard was buried at the church cemetery in Clifton Campville. After their grandparents had died, two more Oakey children were born to Thomas and Ann: a third John in 1676, and Mary in 1678.

Thomas and Ann Oakey outlived all but two of their six boys. As mentioned, the first John died at the age of three. Walter died at nine, and the second John before age 11. The third John lived fewer than 18 years. I could not determine when Susanne, the oldest girl, died. Mary, the youngest, lived only eight months.[2] Sarah lived three years. William, died at age 64 in Willesley in 1747. Thomas died in Willesley in 1698. There will be much more on his death later.

Mary's death in 1678 is the last evidence that we have for the Oakey family in Chilcote.

Thomas and Ann moved to Willesley sometime between 1678 and 1698 after all their children were born. The other surviving son, Thomas II, also moved to Willesley, probably when his parents did.

No Oakey is mentioned in the Chilcote records for the next 100 years, though I do not have access to burial records. There is a gap of 18 years before Thomas and Ann re-appear in Willesley.

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[2] She was christened April 10, 1678 and buried January 12, 1678. This apparent inconsistency was caused by the practice of counting the beginning of the year from March 25th.

Chapter Two -- Willesley

Willesley Hall 1830's

Willesley was a significant manor when the Doomsday Book[3] was written in 1086. The manor was owned by Henry de Ferriers, a courtier of King William the Conqueror, but it had been important even before the Norman invasion in 1066. William's predecessor Edward the Confessor granted Willesley in 1002 to Burton Abby.

Sir Thomas Abney 1640-1722

The manor at Willesley was the birthplace of Sir Thomas Abney, who served as Lord Mayor of London 1700-1701. Sir Edward Abney, Thomas' older brother, lived at that time in the manor. Sir Edward was a Member of Parliament 1690-1698, right during the time of the Oakey story in Willesley. The St. Thomas church there had been built in the 14th Century. There was coal mining close by as early as 1635, the Oakthorpe colliery. Willesley was part of the Derbyshire "Island."

Willesley is now an extremely small village just two miles away from the important city of Ashley de la Zeuch. Wikipedia states that it would be classed as a hamlet, if it didn't have a church. Its population today is only about 60 people, the same number that it had in 1860. I do not have a population figure for 1798, the beginning of this chapter of the story, but I doubt that it would be much different.

St. Thomas Church, Willesley

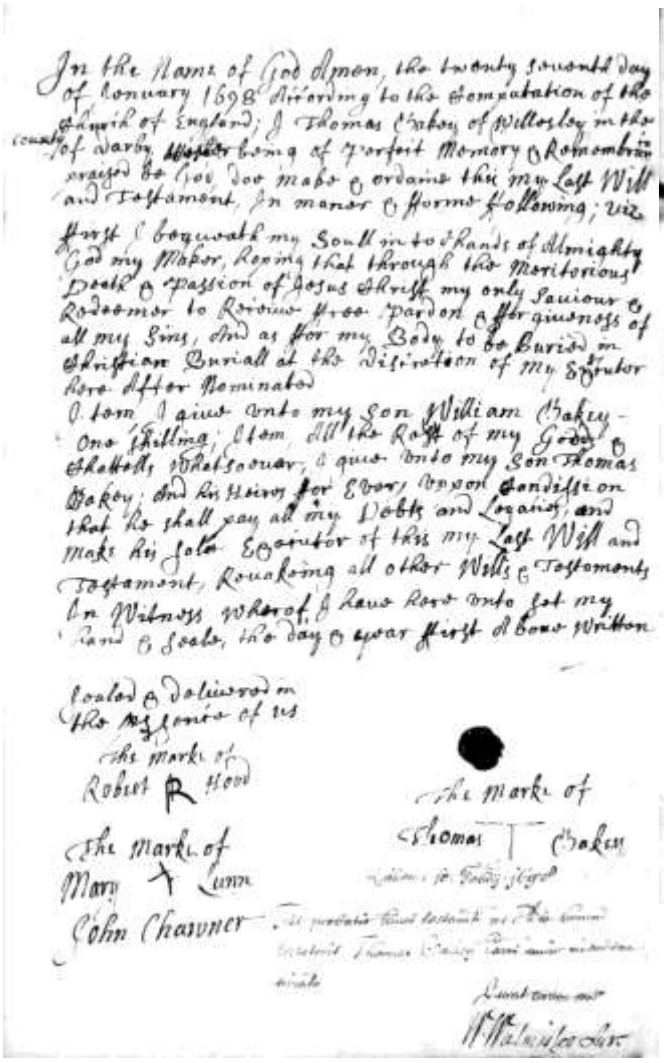
The village church began recording christenings there in 1677. I read the whole original volume and studied it. The entries were very sparse at first. The first record was the death of Lady Damaris Abney, daughter of Sir Edward, buried October 30, 1677. The aristocratic Abney family and the Oakeys constituted many of the sparse entries in the Willesley registry between 1677 and 1703 including the death of Sir Edward's first wife, three children and his 93 year old father. In the first 25 years there were only 95 entries, an average of fewer than 4 per year. Eleven of these were Oakeys. The majority were from just seven family surnames including the Abneys. It appears that Willesley consisted mostly of the manor and the

[3] The Doomsday book is a manuscript record of the "Great Survey" of much of England and parts of Wales completed by order of King William the Conqueror.

tiny church, which probably mainly served the gentry in the manor and their employees and tenant farmers.

On June 25, 1696 the clerk of the Willesley church recorded the burial of Ann Oakey, wife of Thomas. It was just the third entry down the page, written in somewhat smaller letters, from the notation of the passing of the father of the two knights, James Abney Esquire, in his 93rd year.

And now it is my pleasure to share with you a rare and important document, the last will and testament of Thomas Oakey. I have reproduced the original. It is not easy to read, but definitely worth a try. Next I will share my best effort at a transcription. And then I will endeavor to analyze the implications.



In the Name of God Amen, the twenty seventh day of January 1698 According to the Computation of the Church of England; I Thomas Oakey of Willesley in the county of Derby Weaver being of perfect Memory & Remembrance praised be God doe make & ordaine this my Last Will and Testament, in manner & forme following; viz.

First I bequeath my Soull into the Hands of Almighty God my Maker, hoping that through the Meritorious Death & passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour & Redeemer to Receive free pardon & forgiveness of all my Sins, and as for my Body to be buried in Christian Burial at the Discretion of my Executor here after Nominated

Item I give unto my Son William Oakey One Shilling; Item all the Rest of my Goods & Chattells whatsoever, I give unto my Son Thomas Oakey; and his Heirs for Ever, upon Condition that he shall pay all my Debts and Legacies; and Make his sole Executor of this my Last Will and Testament, Revoaking all other Wills & Testaments In Witness Whereof I have here unto set my hand & Seale, the day & year first above Written

Sealed & Delivered in the presence of us

The marke of Robert R Hood

The Marke of Mary M Lunn

John Chawner

The Marke of Thomas T Oakey

A true & perfect Inventory of the goods and Chattells of Thomas Oakey of Willesley in the County Derby Weaver Taken Valued & Apprized by us whose Names are Under written this fourth day of February, in the Tenth year of the Reign of our Soveraign Lord King William the Third By the Grace of God &c Anno Dom 1698

In Master and Formes Following

		£	s	d
In ye Shop	Wares & Apparrill	02	01	03
In ye House	Lumber & Geares	00	18	04
	Pewter and Brass	00	09	10
In ye Parlor	Cloth & Bedding two Bedsteds & two Chests	01	17	06
In ye Chamber	Some Chests & two Bedsteds	00	16	09
	Lumber	00	05	07
	Beasts & Swine on ye Barne	04	06	08
	Corne in the Sheild	02	15	08
	Carts Plow & Geares	02	02	04
	Quick Goods	03	11	02
	Debts desperate	17	03	11
	Debts Spetate	00	10	06
		00	05	08
	Sum is	34	15	02

The marke of Robert R Hood

The Marke of Daniell D Ludford

John Chawner

In the name of God, Amen, the twenty-seventh day of January 1698 according to the computation of the Church of England, I Thomas Oakey of Willesley in the County of Darby, being of perfect memory and remembrance praised be God, I do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, viz.

First I bequeath my soull into the hands of Almighty God my maker, hoping that through the meritorious Death and Passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to Review free Pardon and Forgiveness of all my Sins, and as for my Body, to be Buried in Christian Buriall at the discretion of my executor hereafter Nominated.

Item, I give unto my son William Oakey one shilling.
Item, All the rest of my Goods and Chattells whatsoever I give unto my son Thomas Oakey and his Heirs forever upon condition that he shall pay all my Debts and Legacies and make him sole executor of this my last Will and Testament, Revoking all other Wills and Testaments.
In Witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seale the day and year first Above written.
Sealed and delivered in the presence of us.

The Marke of Robert Hood
The Marke of Mary Lunn
The Marke of Thomas Oakey (Sr.)
The Marke of Daniell Ludford
John Chawner

A True and Perfect Inventory of the Goods and Chattells of Thomas Oakey of Wellesley in the county of Darby, Weaver, Lately Deceased, Taken and appraised by us whose names are under written this fourth day of February, in the Tenth Year of the Reign of our sovereign Lord King William the Third by the Grace of God yr. Anno Dom. 1698/9 in Manner and forms following:

		£	s	p
	Purss and Apperill	*02*	*01*	*03*
In the shop	*Lumes and Geares* (looms and gear)	*00*	*18*	*04*
In the House	*Fire Irons, one Cubbard, one Table and one form*	*00*	*09*	*10*
	Puter (Pewter) *and Brass*	*00*	*17*	*06*
In the Parlor	*Bed and Bedding, two Sofers, and two Chaises*	*01*	*16*	*09*
Chamber	*Some Shoes and two shelves*	*00*	*05*	*07*
	Lumber	*00*	*06*	*08*
	Corne and Pease (peas) *in the Barne*	*04*	*15*	*08*
	Corne in the Field	*02*	*02*	*04*
	Carte, Plow and Geares	*03*	*11*	*02*
	Quick Goods (Livestock)	*17*	*03*	*11*
	Debts desperatt (desperate, or uncollectable)	*00*	*10*	*06*
	Debts Parant (to first party lender)	*00*	*05*	*08*
	Sum is	*34*	*15*	*02*

(Equivalent in 2015: £ 6,600 or $8,177)

I can't read the Latin at the bottom. I think it is a court notation of the probate.

So, what can we learn from this?

Basically, Thomas willed his entire estate to his younger son Thomas II, our ancestor, and his heirs forever (that would include us!) and limited his bequest to his older son William to a single shilling. Then under the direction of Thomas II, his appointed executor, his holdings were enumerated and valued.

But so many questions arise, some of which can be answered, some not.

Whatever could have happened between William and his father? I could find no clue. It appears that William spent the remainder of his life in Stretton en le Field, a slightly larger village about three miles to the southeast, where Thomas II also raised his family. I was unable to find a marriage record for William, though he was almost certainly married. There were numerous christenings in Stretton over the next few years listing the father as William Okey, however with various mothers, so I'm not sure who belonged to him. He died there at the age of 64 in 1747.

What does it mean that Thomas made a will at all? The number of wills in the indexed collection for that time and place is very small. Did that indicate that Thomas had special standing in the community? My theory is that he made a will expressly to exclude William, who as the older son would have otherwise received the estate.

Who were Robert Hood, Mary Lunn, Daniell Lunford, and John Chawner, the witnesses to the document?

I thought at first, that Robert Hood was a member of the aristocratic Hood family of Bardon Park, who owned much of the surrounding area and will be central figures in a later chapter. But if so, he was only peripherally related. I was able to determine that he was from the castle town of Ashby de la Zouch, three miles to the north. He was born in 1662, the son of William and Ann Hood. His father was a carrier.[4] I suspect that Robert may have directed the process of preparing the will, being the first witness. That he signed with his initial R suggests at least some literacy. Robert hood died in 1717.

Daniell Ludford was a young single man, who lived in Willesley. I suspect that he was a personal friend of young Thomas II. The church register shows that he married Sarah Hall in Willesley five years later and records the baptism of each of his four sons through 1704. His sign appears to be a D, showing a degree of literacy. I noticed that his name was recorded in the will in exactly the same handwriting as in the church records. It was identical down to the idiosyncratic flourishes, proving that the will was written by the clerk of the St. Thomas Church who wrote the registry. There were probably few if any other townspeople who could write.

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[4] A carrier (or carter) was the driver of horse-drawn vehicles for transporting goods. A carter typically drove a light two wheeled carriage.

John Chawner was probably that clerk. He alone of all the witnesses could sign his name. His handwriting seems quite consistent with the writing in the church records. I don't see his name in that record, which suggests that he, too, lived in Ashby, not Willesley. I did notice that he had a will written for himself before his death in 1712. He had different witnesses to the will, but the inventory of his goods was done by the same Robert Hood and Daniell Ludford. His will reveals that he had two adult sons with families living in other villages, which suggests that John was a generation older than the other witnesses, further evidence to me that he may have been the clerk of the church.

Mary Lunn, the fourth witness, was a 22 year old single woman from Stretton en le Field. Just 18 months later she would marry the beneficiary of the will, Thomas Oakey II, in Stretton on June 4, 1699. The marriage entry stated that both of them were from Willesley. I wonder whether her witnessing of the signing was the beginning of their relationship, or she was chosen as a witness precisely because they were already moving toward marriage. I'll have more to say about that in the next chapter.

The references in the will to God and Jesus Christ suggest that Thomas felt a fervent religious conviction, although it is possible that this could have been boilerplate language used in wills. That Thomas used a T rather than the usual X for his signature may suggest some degree of literacy.

It is significant that among the assets listed in the will there was no land or house. Thomas must have been a tenant farmer. Probably his farm belonged to the owners of the manor, the Abney family. He must have been current in his rent, since none was deducted from his assets. That was not the case for John Chawner's estate, which diminished to half the value of Thomas' after rent to "The Lady" was deducted.

Thomas was not just a farmer, but also a weaver, just like at least four generations of his Oakey descendants. The folder in which his will was stored gave his profession as webster, which has the same meaning. Of course, that is why he possessed a "lume" and "geares."

The house he rented was substantial for the time. It contained at least three rooms: a living area, a parlor, and a bedroom. He also possessed a barn and a cart, which suggests that one of his animals was an ox or a horse. And he had a significant number of animals. They were not described specifically, but they constituted fully half of the value of his estate, £17. By comparison, John Chawner's livestock (three cows and 15 sheep) were valued at £14, so Thomas probably had more animals than that.

Thomas Oakey I was buried in Wellesley four days after the will was executed, on January 31, 1698.

Although Thomas Oakey II and Mary Lund were later married in Stretton, they returned to make their home in Willesley for several more years, probably in the house Thomas II had grown up in, enjoying the goods and animals he inherited from his father. I know this because their first five children were born in Willesley by 1704.

Now the story gets a bit more complicated. If you are not interested in genealogy, you might want to skip to the next chapter. But if you are, I would love to have you weigh in on the following problem and give me some advice on how to put it all together.

Thomas' first child was named Sarah. Her christening date was recorded in the Willesley church record book as January 21, 1699. Her parents were indicated as Thomas and Mary Oakey. This was almost exactly a year after her grandfather's will and three and a half months *before* the marriage of Thomas II and Mary Lunn. That is hard to explain. It would suggest either that Thomas II had been in a prior marriage to someone else also named Mary or that their relationship was already very intimate (shall we say) at the time of the will. Supporting the possibility of a prior marriage is the fact that Thomas II was 10 years older than Mary Lunn and 32 years old when Sarah was born.

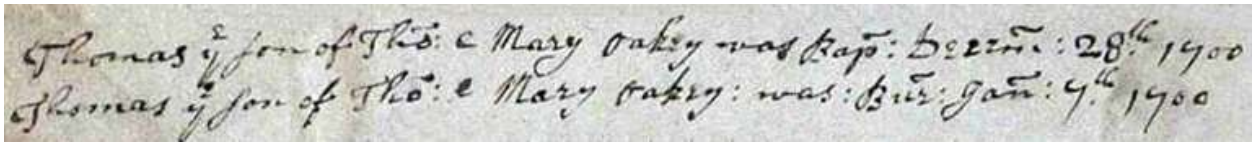
My Aunt Mary Ida was not aware of Mary Lunn when she researched the Oakey family tree. Her tree indicates that Thomas II had married a woman named Mary Harrison on August 8, 1698. There was no source for this listed, but the very specific date had to come from somewhere. If true, this marriage would have taken place five months before the will was written and only 10 months before Thomas' marriage to Mary Lunn. If Thomas had been married to both Marys, Mary Harrison must have died (or left) after Sarah's birth, but before the marriage to Mary Lunn three months later. That seems unlikely. I found a Mary Harrison of the appropriate age in the town of Breedon on the Hill about eight miles away, but no evidence of a marriage to a Thomas Oakey at any location, and there was no evidence of a Mary Oakey death within 20 miles of Willesley during that time. So I think that in this case, Mary Ida was probably wrong.

And then the story gets more complicated.

Mary Ida's family group sheet lists a boy named Thomas Oakey born the same day as Sarah—January 21, 1699. Evidently Mary Ida felt that he was a twin brother to Sarah, who died January 7, 1700/1[5] just before his first birthday.

Then she lists a third child, also named Thomas, who was born December 28, 1700, just three days before his infant brother died. This would be our ancestor, Thomas Oakey III.

Now here's the problem with her interpretation. First, there is no birth record for a Thomas born on January 21, 1699, only for Sarah. I can't find one for any time in that decade. Looking at the entries for December 28, 1700 and the following entry on January 7, 1700/1, the simpler solution would support just a single Thomas who only lived nine days. Second, is it reasonable that the parents would name the third child Thomas *before* the first Thomas had died? This is how the entry looks:


Thomas ye Son of Thō: & Mary Oakey was bapt: Decem: 28th 1700
Thomas ye Son of Thō: & Mary Oakey: was: Bur: Jan: 4th 1700

[5] That notation means 1700 on the British calendar, but 1701 on ours.

So, Mary Ida felt that the first entry was the second Thomas, our ancestor Thomas Oakey III, and the second entry was the earlier Thomas, who died as an infant. We both postulate a previous marriage, but neither she nor I have been able to document it.

I want Mary Ida's version to be true, for otherwise there would be no surviving Thomas at all in this particular family. And if that is so, Thomas III came from another set of parents, and we don't descend from Richard, Thomas, and Thomas II at all. And chapters one and two are about some other Oakey family than ours. That would be sad.

There were 13 babies christened in England between 1695 and 1707 named Thomas Oakey or Okey, but only two others within 20 miles of this location. One of these was born in Ticknall to John and Elizabeth Okey, only eight miles north of Willesley, but he died at the age of 19, and so he could not be our ancestor. The other was born in Netherseale, only four miles away and even had a father named Thomas, but this child died in infancy. Of course, it is possible that I am not finding another Thomas simply because the records have not yet been made available—genealogists estimate that only about 85%[6] of the parish records in Derbyshire have been filmed and indexed. Most of the remaining un-filmed records are likely in very small villages such as we are dealing with. And some of the available records are so difficult to read, that indexing errors may have occurred that make them unavailable to computer searches. For this reason, I have tried to personally read all the filmed records of that period in the villages I've written about, but with no success in finding our Thomas. However I couldn't look at one record book from Stretton en le Field, which is available only in the microfilm library in the Salt Lake family history library. I plan to look at it when I can.[7]

So, for now, I'm going with Mary Ida's version, complicated as it is, because I can't find another option.

We've discussed Thomas II and Mary's first three children, all born in Willesley. The fourth was named John. He just lived a year. He was followed by another John in 1703, who eventually married had a large family in Willesley (which I was able to trace for generations). Mary died as an infant in 1704. Sometime in the next six years the family moved to Mary Lunn's home village of Stretton en le Field, where the next daughter, Ann, was born.

During the family's last years in Willesley two important historical events occurred. The Oakey family was likely aware of only one of them, but the other would have a profound effect upon the religious lives of their descendants.

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[6] https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/England_Church_Records

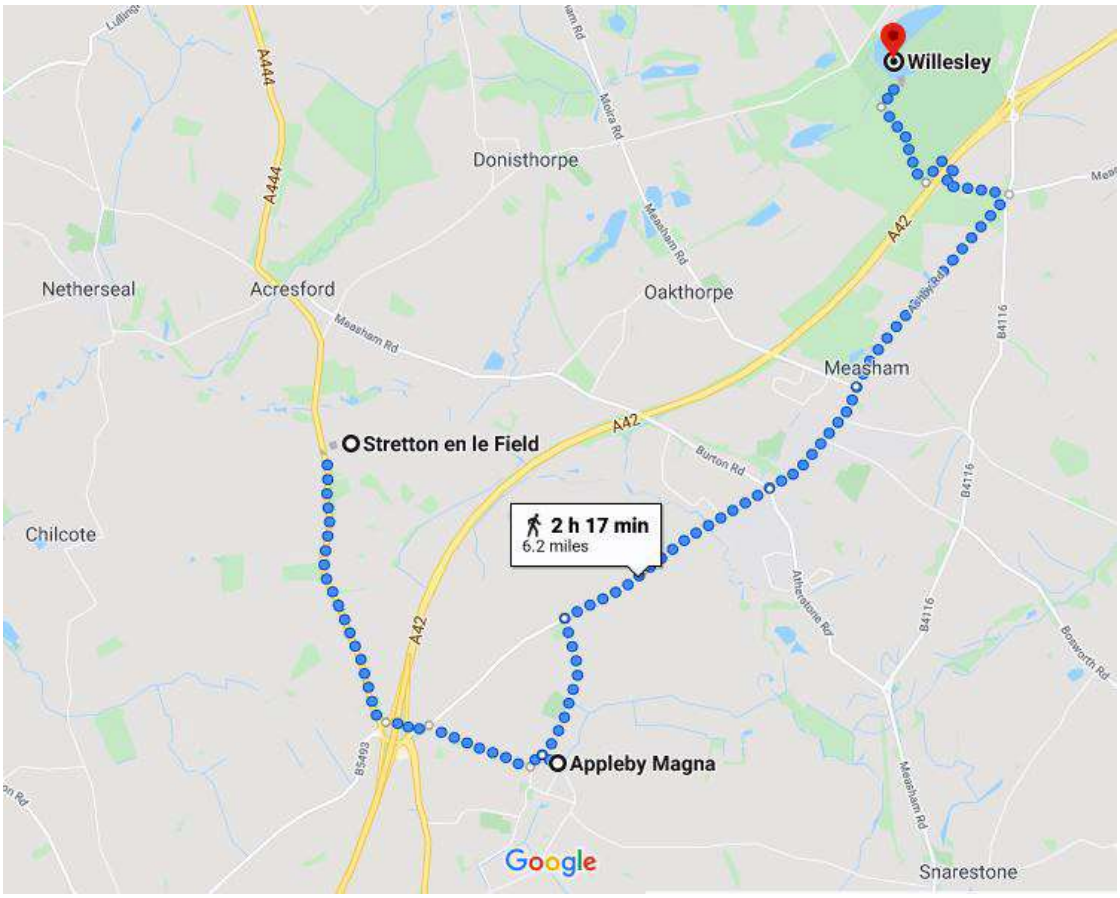
[7] That is GS Film Number 428943, Digital Folder Number 007561574, Indexing Number Co6045-2, system origin ODM.

On March 8, 1702 King William died without an heir. His sister-in-law Ann became queen, and reigned until 1714.

In 1703 John Wesley, the founder of Methodism was born.

Chapter Three -- Stretton en le Field

Stretton is only three miles from Willesley as the crow flies. At that time it was probably at least twice as large as Willesley, but still only a village. I imagine the Oakeys had frequently moved back and forth, both before and after they moved there. I don't know how many people lived in Stretton at the time, but many of them were Mary Lunn's family. Her parents, Henry and Deborah Lunn, had been christened in nearby Netherseal, another hamlet about a mile and a half away near Chilcote, but like Mary, her four younger brothers were all born in Stretton. At least two of them were beginning their own families there as the Oakeys arrived.



Stretton en le Field had a population of 212 people in 1801, but it has continually shrunk since then. There were 109 in 1831, 70 in 1891, and only 36 in 2001. Anciently the name meant "street in the field," which referred to an old Roman road built in in the fourth century, which probably ran where Tamworth Road, the A42, now runs. Two Roman ruins were found between Stretton and Appleby Magna, which is an even smaller village located two miles further south across the present A42 highway. Fairly recent archeological excavations made before building a hotel and a McDonald's restaurant at the junction of

A44 with the A42 unearthed coins of the Constantine Era (301-337 AD) with pottery and roofing tiles of the same age, where a Roman farm had supported a Villa.

St. Michael's Church, Stretton
David Rogers / *St Michael's Stretton-en-le-Field* /
CC BY-SA 2.0

A travel writer wrote in 1836 of "very rich land" around Stretton en le Field. The village was described as "neat and pleasant." The Oakey family probably attended the St. Michael's Church there, which was built in the 1300s, now "redundant" (which means that it is no longer used for services) but still consecrated. It is made of the local sandstone and it is still standing, a tourist site run by the rectory in Swadlincote, about five miles to the north. When the Oakeys lived in Stretton, there was a manor there with tenant farmers. The manor was still standing right beside the church during World War II, when it was used to billet solders and later to house Italian war prisoners, but it was demolished in 1945.

The earliest images available online of this parish's registry begin in 1689. However, Mary's christening date of January 6, 1676 has been indexed, so there must have been an earlier registry book. It turns out that the original is on microfilm at the family history center in Salt Lake City. When the Covid 19 restrictions are over I hope to look it over. Perhaps there will be a clue there to the Thomas II problem.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Ann Oakey's christening was in Stretton in 1710. Strangely, the next child, Mary, was christened in Willesley in 1713, but their last, whom they named Joseph, was christened in Stretton en le Field in April, 1716.

At that time their family would have consisted of Sarah, age 17, Thomas III 16, John 13, Anne 6, and Mary 3. I don't know what happened after that to Sarah, the daughter born before Mary and Thomas II's marriage. I can find no marriage record for her. There is a burial record for a Sarah Okey at Church Gresley, about five miles to the north. If that is our Sarah, she would have been 19 years old when she died.

There was a financial panic in England in November, 1720.

On June 11, 1727 King George died suddenly of a stroke while visiting his native Hanover in Germany and was succeeded by his son 44 year old son, George II. That was a big year for the Oakeys. Their daughter Ann had died in Stretton on April 5th at the age of 17. Two weeks later, her mother, Mary Lunn Oakey died at age 56. William Oakey, the brother of Thomas II who received only a shilling in their father's will, died in November.

Thomas III was 27 years old that year. I have found no record of his marriage, but it likely happened around 1727. He married someone named Mary. I know this from the

christening record of their son Joseph Oakey, who was christened July 9, 1728 in Stretton en le Field. Joseph is my fifth great grandfather. I don't know his mother's maiden name nor where she came from. I also know nothing about the births of any other children besides Joseph. It seems possible that he was not their first child, since when he was born, his father was 28 years old. It seems to me that there should be a marriage record for Thomas and Mary and christening records for other children in Stretton, but I can't find anything but Joseph's online.

My theory as to why the records seem to have disappeared is that Thomas III may have become a dissenter from the Church of England during that time. As we will see in the next chapter, his descendants had mainly left the Church of England by the time of the marriage of his son Joseph in 1753. Many dissenting congregations were popping up throughout England. Nearby Bardon Park became the center of a network of such groups during the next few years. It seems reasonable to think that christenings, marriages, and burials were not consistently recorded in those budding congregations, and when they were, records could have been lost to history when groups merged or died out.

Thomas Oakey II was buried in Stretton en le Field on January 22, 1731 at the age of 65. Thomas III was 31 and Joseph was just three at the time.

Mary Oakey, the younger sister of Thomas II, married Francis Wright when she was 20 years old in 1733. Thomas' brother John Oakey married Elizabeth Storer a year later. The Storers moved back to Willesley, where they had a large family.

1740 was an extremely cold weather year in England, probably due to ash from a volcano eruption in Japan the prior summer. That year the itinerant minister George Whitefield, John Wesley's associate, visited Selena, the Countess Huntingdon at Castle Donington about 15 miles to the north of Stretton and converted her to the "great awakening." Later, possibly through the missionary work of her servants, one of many small congregations of dissenters organized a dissenting chapel in Penn Lane in Melbourne, which would figure prominently in a later generation of Oakeys and later chapters of this story.

On April 13, 1742 Joseph Handel performed The Messiah for the first time.

1752 was the year of the great calendar change in England and its colonies. In the 9th century AD the start of the year was moved by the Catholic Church to March 25 to highlight the day of Annunciation. This was adopted by England in the late 12th century. In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII and most Catholic nations moved it back to January 1 and dropped 10 days to better align the new calendar with solar mechanics, but Britain was not taking orders from the Pope and retained the old system, "double dating" the year between January 1 and March 25 in a weak effort to harmonize. By 1752 anti-Catholic sentiment had finally died down enough to allow British calendars to synchronize with the rest of Europe, including dropping 11 days in September and adjusting the leap year schedule. Since then, the earlier calendar differences have been forgotten, save by genealogists and historians.

Around March, 1753, Joseph Oakey was married in Bardon Park, which is about 12 miles east of Stretton en le Field. This information came from Mary Ida's notes, and she gave no source. I couldn't find one either. Another unsourced date for Joseph's marriage of 1756 is derived from other pedigrees. This actually seems more likely to me, since their first child, John, was christened in 1757. To this day Joseph's bride is known only as "Mrs. Joseph Oakey." But we know about his children, all of whom were christened there in Bardon Park.

Had Joseph married just a year later, we would probably have great information about it. On March 25, 1754 Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act came into force, which standardized all marriages in England. Among other requirements, it stipulated that no marriage would from then on be valid unless performed in an Anglican Church by an ordained minister of the Church of England. Only Jews and Quakers were exempted. It would not be until 1836 that any Catholic or dissenting couple could be married in a church of their faith. A pre-printed marriage form was introduced which required signatures of the married couple, the vicar, and multiple witness as well as information on the home parish and whether they had married by license or banns. That has been a boon for genealogists.

Chapter Four -- Bardon Park

To begin my work on Joseph Oakey I looked for Bardon Park on Google maps, my usual practice as I begin to evaluate source material. To my surprise, there is no such town in Leicestershire. It really never was a town, but an actual park. The map shows Bardon Hill, but now even the park no longer exists. Both the hill and the park have been the victim of "progress," most of the hill having been devoured by a terraced rock quarry. Bardon Hill reaches 912 feet above sea level, the highest point in Leicestershire. From there one can see into all three of the surrounding counties. Many people have visited and climbed the hill for that purpose including Her Majesty the Queen Dowager, who in 1830 along with her sister, the Duchess of Saxe Weimar and a passel of attendants and ladies of the court, took a hike to the top for the view and afterwards enjoyed an outdoor picnic in the shade of the manor, Bardon Hall. Bardon Park, like most locations in England, has an amazing history. And that history illuminates the lives of the Oakey family.

On the so-called castle mound at the foot of Bardon Hill, a Bronze Age farmstead has been excavated, so the region has probably been continuously occupied since at latest 800 BC, possibly up to a millennium longer. The hill was used by the Romans, at the very least as a lookout.

I do not know exactly when the Whitwick Castle was built. It was sometime before King John turned it over to William de Sewill in 1204. The forest to the south of the castle was "emparked" before 1299, when the fortress was passed to John de Barr.[8] He was given license to sell wood from the park at Bardon and to hunt privately for deer. The castle itself was in ruins before 1427, but a manor of importance arose and has continued in Whitwick.

Bardon Park remained a possession of the manor at Whitwick. In 1507 there were four dwellings there, probably belonging to caretakers of the 1,200 acres of grounds.

In 1512 the manor in Whitwick (and with it, I assume the park as well) reverted to King Henry VIII.[9] Whitwick and its park remained property of the monarchy for exactly 100 years until James I sold the manor to Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon. The Hastings family held the manor through the 19th century, but they sold the park to the Hood family, who had been tenants there since 1574, evidently having been employed by Queen Elizabeth to be caretakers. The Hood family held the park until 1833 when William Hood died at the age of 90.

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[8] The origin of the name Bardon Park is not known. Perhaps it is derived from de Barr's name. A popular modern myth has it that the name was derived from a bear den on the hill.

[9] That was when Henry VIII was only 21 years old and still married to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. His storied break with the Catholic Church would not take place until two decades later.

The great mathematician Sir Isaac Newton was born in 1642 at Woolsthorpe Manor, just 34 miles east of the park, six months before the British Civil War between the Parliamentarians and the King's Loyalists broke out 23 miles north of the park at Nottingham Castle.

That same year John Hood, a young scion of the Hood family, was born at the manor house in Bardon Park. I wonder whether he and Newton knew each other. At the time there were four inhabited dwelling houses on the hill including the manor, some of which have stood until into the 20th century.

By 1662 Oliver Cromwell's brief reign had ended and England was again governed by a king. Under the influence of Charles II, the Act of Unity was passed by Parliament, called by its opponents the Great Ejection. In it, religious non-conformists such as Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers were forbidden to hold government office or to attend universities. The law also disqualified 2,500 ministers of the Church of England who did not conform the Book of Common Prayer, which was essentially the church handbook.

In 1665 the Five Mile Act was enacted, which prevented all nonconformists from meeting within five miles of any incorporated town.

John Hood, then 23 years old, lived in a moated manor called Bardon Hall set in the medieval deer park. He was a dissenter himself and got around the law by holding Sunday meetings for the gentry in his mansion in the park, led by an itinerant preacher who had been ejected from the ministry in 1662 named Richard Southwell.

Religious tensions had eased somewhat by 1689, when Parliament passed the Act of Toleration, allowing dissenters to assemble if they registered their meeting house. Within five years John Hood, by then 52 years old, had built a meeting house just outside the gate to Bardon Park, using stone from the quarry on Bardon Hill.[10] Hood hired a Presbyterian-trained dissenting minister named Michael Matthews, who had been ordained in 1690, to be

2. Bardon Park Meeting-House, drawn and engraved by J.P. Malcolm. *After* Nichols, 4.2, as n.8, p. 983, Pl CXLIX

[10] Hood did not officially register the church until 1702, probably waiting for the end of the reign of William III, who was hostile to dissenters.

the permanent pastor in the new chapel. From that time on, the church served not only the gentry, but also the common people, including the farmers, colliers, and quarry workers of the area, and also eventually the Oakey family.

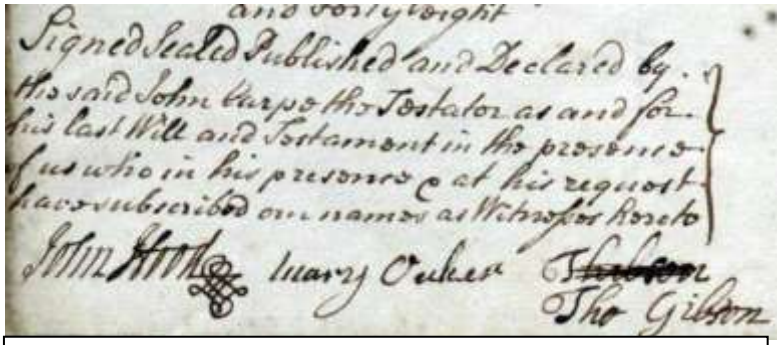
It was the oldest non-conformist place of worship in all the East Midlands of England and the largest in Leicestershire. John Hood died at Bardon Hall in 1714 and was buried at Markfield, three miles down the road from the hall and a place where John Wesley was said to have preached 13 times. The church there had been the parish for the Hood family since 1574.

In 1715, the "Evans List,"[11] described the Bardon Park congregation as 340 "hearers" of which 30 were voters (gentry.)

The Oakey family was still living at Stretton en la Field at that time, but it was during the next four decades that the family became difficult to find in church records. There is a tiny bit of evidence that they may have moved to Bardon Park

1. Part of a plan of Charnwood Forest (1754), surveyed by Samuel Wild, master of the Free School at Woodhouse. The Meeting-House is on the south–west side of Bardon Park. *After* Nichols, 3.1, as n.8, p.131, Pl XXIII. The original of this map is in the LRO, DG, 9/MA/61/1 (Herrick MSS) 'Perambulation round Charnwood Forest', 1754; there are some differences between this and Nichols's print

[11] This was a study commissioned by the Committee of the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations in an about the Cities of London and Westminster.


Mary Oaker's signature alongside John Hood's in 1748

some time before October 1, 1748, when a person named Mary Oaker witnessed the will of the yeoman John Earpe, which was executed at Bardon Park on that day. She could have been the wife of Thomas Oakey III, if this is one of the variations we've seen in spelling that name. Definite proof that the Oakeys had become dissenters, at least by November of 1757, came when Mary's grandson John Oakey was christened in Bardon Park. By then the Oakeys were living there permanently. The family had left the Church of England for good—well, almost, as we will see. Little did they know that for some of them that step would eventually lead to Mormonism and a giant move to America.

The above map was produced about a year after the date when Joseph Oakey is said to have been married in Bardon Park. Of course, actually he could not have been married there because it was not an Anglican Parish church as was by then required by law. (Note that the map is not oriented with north at the top.) It is obvious that Bardon Park was not a town, not even a hamlet. There were very few buildings shown anywhere in the area.

The stone summer house was built at the top of Bardon Hill in 1743.

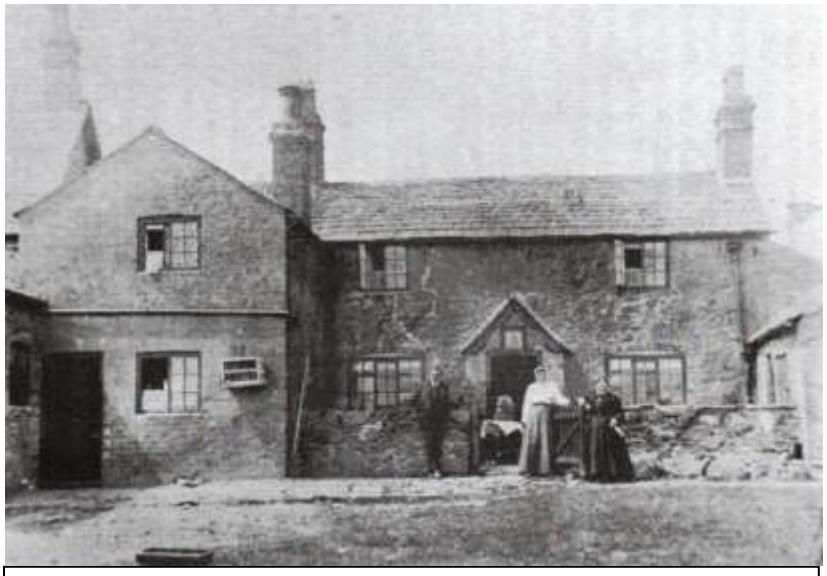
Summer House
Bardon Hill

I looked through 10 years of the dissenting church christening records for the region beginning in 1753. Whoever indexed the records labeled them as belonging to Ashby de la Zouch, but that is not accurate. Those christenings were all performed by the young Reverend Jeremiah Dethick in the chapel at Bardon Park. But of the 126 christened children, only 10 were living in Bardon Park, an average of only one per year, and five of those were Oakey family members. The congregation was mostly composed of residents of the surrounding villages. If you look closely at the old map on the previous page you can find the chapel (circled in red) and five surrounding hamlets: Charley, Whitwick, Stanton-under-Bardon, Markfield, and Hugglescote (Hucklescote on the map). Including the ten christenings from Bardon Park itself, 58% of the christenings came from those six villages within three miles of the church. There were dissenters from 17 more towns and villages within 12.5 miles who received Bardon Park christenings including a few from Ashby de la Zouch. Only seven percent came from towns more than 12.5 miles away.

I have concluded that the Oakeys lived in one of the houses in the park, most likely running one of the several small farms there of 100-120 acres. Some of the farmhouses were known as Hill Farm (later Kellam's Farm), Keeper's Cottage, Old Rice Rocks, and Bott's Hill

Farm. There were also servants living in the manor. A modern writer[12] described one of the surviving houses as follows.

It is...likely that the original roofs were thatch, using whatever materials came to hand, possibly either reed, sedge, or straw. The walls of the houses were constructed of field stone packed with clay and roughly pointed with cement mortar. Such walls became safe homes for rodents of all kinds and evidence of their occupation with grain strewn runs and tunnels in the soft clay. Before the advent of effective rat poison, the scuffling of the rodents could often be heard by the human occupants of the houses. Timber for the beams, trimmed with an adze, came from ancient oaks felled on the spot, while the rafters, also of oak were either sawn, split, or left round. The two upper floors had wattles or faggots of some description laid on the floor joists and all three floors were finished in a coarse limestone-based cement....The underside of the upper floors were plastered between the joists to form a clean ceiling which served not only to preserve the sticks but also stopped the bits and pieces and insects from dropping down on the occupants below or into their food....Although staircases have been



Upper Greenhill (White's) Farm about a century later, probably similar to the Oakey's home, possibly the very one.

added, the original ladder access trap to the upper floor is still evident in the arrangement of the ceiling beams. The house was sited at a spring which feeds a surface well, some 30 feet deep, walled with dry stone...There were two rooms, a scullery and a pantry on the ground floor, two bedrooms on the first floor and two rooms in the attic....The farmhouse was directly connected to the farm buildings but there was no direct access within the buildings.

John, the first child of Joseph Oakey and his wife, was christened at Bardon Park on November 6, 1757. He was followed eleven months later by William, and James was

[12]Len Noble: *Bardon Hill*, Quorn Litho, Loughborough, Leicestershire, 1995, p. 147-148.

christened in 1761. Their only girl was christened May 14, 1763. They named her Elizabeth.[13]

Our ancestor, Joseph Oakey Jr., was christened May 7, 1765.

In that year the Hood family transferred control of the chapel to a board of trustees. The trust deed stipulated no particular denomination would meet there, but simply "protestant dissenters."

All five Oakey children survived infancy, but Elizabeth apparently died when she was five years old. The boys were raised during the years of England's difficulties with its American colonies. The Boston Massacre occurred in 1770, the Boston Tea Party in 1773 and the Declaration of Independence in 1776. In that year, Joseph Oakey Jr. would have been eleven.

The Oakeys' second child, William, was the first to marry. He was only 17 years old when he married a 14-year-old girl from nearby Packington in 1777, who had also been christened as a dissenter in Bardon Park. That was after the Marriage Act, when the legal age for marriage had been raised to 21, but they were exempted because they had passed banns,[14] which allowed for the presumption of parental consent. Confusingly, the bride's maiden name was Elizabeth Oakey, the same as William's little sister, and the two girls were born only four months apart. William seems to have spent the rest of his life running one of the little farms inside Bardon Park. I know this from rental and taxation records collected by the writer who described the houses.[15] In 1794, George Moorley paid rent on "Oakey's Farm" to Lady Day of £9.0 per annum and carriage of two loads of coals. The next year Moorley paid £20, perhaps for his own farm as well as Oakey's. William Oakey paid rent of only 2 shillings and 6 pence. I am assuming that he was paying for a room and not running the farm. They paid the same amounts the following year. William Oakey died November 16, 1804 in Whitwick, just a few miles north of the Park. His wife Elizabeth died three years later in her hometown of Packington. I found no christening records to indicate that they had children.

The year after William's marriage, a person named John Oakey died in Willesley. I am not convinced that this was Joseph's son John—there were a lot of Oakeys in Willesley at that time. But I have been unable to document a marriage for him, nor another plausible death

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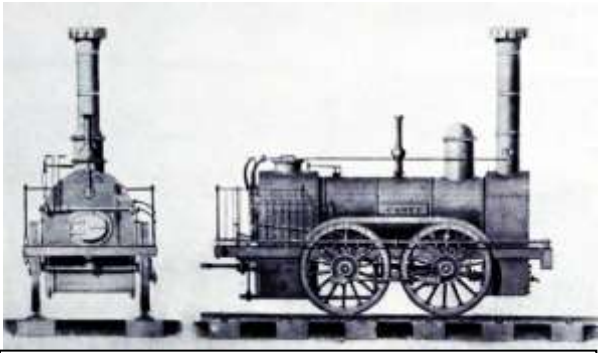
[13] Christening dates are usually good approximations for birth dates, but not always. I found them to be especially unreliable for the Bardon Park congregation. For a stretch of six years, which unfortunately did not include the six Oakey christenings, both the birthday and the christening dates were given. These differed by a range of two weeks to seven years. The average age at christening in that group was a little over seven months.
[14] Banns was a process of announcing to the congregation a couple's intent to marry on three successive Sundays. Marriage was allowed if there were no objections made.
[15] Len Noble: *Bardon Hill*, Quorn Litho, Loughborough, Leicestershire, 1995, p. 225-226.

date. If it was indeed our John, he lived only 21 years. That would explain why William, the second son, was the one to inherit tenancy of the farm.

I was not able to document a marriage for James, the third son, either. He was possibly the James Oakey who died at the age of 85 in Ashby de la Zouch in 1847.

Nor do we have the date of Joseph Oakey, Sr.'s death, or of his wife's. Obviously they died sometime after 1764, when their last son, Joseph Jr. was conceived. No Oakey names appear in the cemetery inventory at Bardon Park, but after 250 years that probably does not mean much. I am not the only genealogist to be frustrated by the lack of church burial records that could help to find them. Less likely possibilities for their burial place might be Ashby de la Zouch, where their children John and Elizabeth were buried or possibly Melbourne, where Joseph Jr. married Elizabeth Pass when he was 23 years old in 1788.

If you are only interested in the Oakey story, you can now skip to the next chapter. But I can't leave this chapter without telling a little more of the history of Bardon Park.

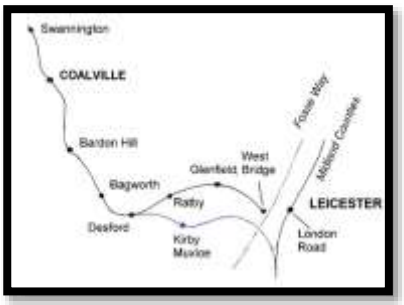


Comet locomotive used in 1832 near Bardon Park

Little of import seemed to occur there for the next 100 years, though of course much happened elsewhere in England. But the coming of the railroad changed everything for Bardon Park.

In 1833 William Hood died at the age of 90 with no descendants. Bardon Park was sold to his second cousin from Bedfordshire, Robert Jacomb-Hood (adopting the Hood name was part of the deal).

That year the Leicester and Swannington railway opened with 16 miles track carrying both passenger and freight cars with a station at Bardon Hill. The first train was pulled by an engine called the Comet and ceremoniously driven by George Stephenson himself, the builder of the Comet and many other engines with astronomical names. He is now known as "The Father of Railways" in England. The railway was a product of Leicestershire's competition with Nottinghamshire which had developed efficient canal to deliver coal. The train probably also carried stone from the quarry on Bardon Hill. It was the first steam public railway to carry both passengers and freight in the Midlands. There was a coal mine 4.3 miles northeast of the Bardon chapel, which quickly became incorporated as Coalville, now one of the more important towns in the area.



Jacomb-Hood built a grand new hall for himself on the hillside in Bardon Park in 1834 and soon demolished the old one. Only the traces of the moat remain to be seen. In 1836 the quarries "came into their own," suggesting commercial success stimulated by the railroad.

The next year Queen Victoria assumed the British crown. In 1840 the old Bardon Park manor was demolished. The outline of the moat can still be seen between the chapel and the new manor up the hill.

The railroad was bought in 1845 by the Midlands Railway.[16]

Bardon Park was sold in 1864 to the Herrick family. Bardon's population in 1871 was 59 persons in 12 houses. It is not clear how many of them were in the park itself. In 1877 the meetinghouse was re-fronted with stone from the quarry and a peaked rooftop was added. Bardon Park was sold again at auction in 1947. The "new" 1834 manor is now the headquarters of the quarry company. The quarry is still operating and has been selling stone since 1796.

There is now a large Amazon distribution center just across the road from the Chapel. The huge quarry is the predominant feature on the satellite view on Google Maps, but it is hidden by trees on the street view of the chapel. The chapel is still used by the United Reformed Church and the Christian Fellowship.

Bardon Park Chapel. Bardon Hill in the background.
Screenshot from Google street view April, 2020.

[16]On August 3, 1856 Joseph Oakey's great grandson, Thomas Oakey, wrote in his journal about a once-in-a-lifetime sightseeing train trip on that rail line from Nottingham to London made by his parents, James and Mary Oakey. That day they rode and walked what must have seemed to them an incredible 252 miles, getting home at two the next morning. *Letters of Lace and Stones,* p. 153.

Chapter Five -- Melbourne

In 1788 Melbourne had about 2,100 people, much larger than the villages that we've discussed so far. It was a market town right on the borders of Leicestershire and Staffordshire, situated near the navigable Trent River, which flows toward Nottingham for 17 miles to the northeast, and from there all the way to the Humber River, which empties into the North Sea by Grimsby, a course of over 100 miles.

Melbourne's history is somewhat eclipsed by that of Derby, a major city and the capital of Derbyshire just eight miles to the north. Derby dates back to an important Roman fort called Derventio which was established about 50 AD, just a few years after the Romans invaded Britain. Today it is an industrial city of a quarter million people, the home of Rolls Royce, Bombardier, and Toyota factories. For many years it was the leading manufacturer of trains, serving as a rail center since the industrial revolution.

St. Michael and St. Mary Church

Melbourne is a pretty place that features one of England's oldest and best preserved Norman churches, the St. Michael and St. Mary, which was built in 1120. It would have seemed almost as ancient to Joseph Oakey as it does to us. Although Joseph's story in Melbourne is heavily entwined with the little Independent Church in Penn Lane, this ancient Anglican Church plays a large role as well, as we shall see.

The name Melbourne once meant "mill stream," and the town still features a beautiful mill pond, really a lake known simply as The Pool, that graces the old church and the Regal Manor, which like the church dates to the twelfth century. Years later, shortly after Joseph Oakey's death, William Lamb, 2nd Viscount of Melbourne, became Prime Minister to William IV in 1834. He was then called back to the job in 1835, when 18 year old Victoria assumed the throne. Lord Melbourne spent hours every day with the young queen, tutoring her in how to run a government. During his term as Prime Minister, the city of Melbourne, Australia was named after him as well as a volcanic mountain in Antarctica.

I can find no evidence that Joseph Oakey's parents or siblings ever lived in Melbourne. His sister Elizabeth seems to have died as a child in Ashby de la Zouch, which suggests that the family had moved there before Joseph was three. Of his three older brothers, two died there and one in Willesley. I don't think that his future wife, Elizabeth Pass was the initial reason why Joseph went to Melbourne. He made his living as a framework knitter, so I think he may have left his parents' home in Ashby de le Zouch seven miles to the south to become an apprentice.

Elizabeth Pass' parents had been married in the St. Michael and St. Mary Church on December 7, 1769. John Pass was 25. He and his 22 year old brother William, who

witnessed the ceremony, were able to sign their own names; Dorothy Grundy, the bride, made an x. I have to admit, that I am not absolutely sure that William was John's brother, although it seems quite likely. John's lineage is another somewhat shaky link in this story. The only John Pass of his time with an indexed christening record was from a family in Goostrey, Cheshire, about 50 miles to the north. It is possible that our John came from there, but in those days, common people did not travel much. There were several Pass families already living in Melbourne and many more in the nearby villages, so it makes more sense to me that he was a native. If the William Pass who witnessed the wedding was John's brother, then their father would have been John Pass (Sr.) born in Melbourne in 1706. William's grandfather, also named John, was born in Measham, near Willesley. The family of their mother, Dorothy Grundy, was from Melbourne.

Some Pass family members show up in Melbourne's Church of England records and also in Melbourne's Baptist records, but most of them affiliated with the dissenting Independent (Congregationalist) Church, whose members had built a tidy little chapel on Penn Lane in 1768. The congregation started modestly. I know this from their handwritten registry of christenings, which has an interesting story of its own, which I would like to relate to you now.

Jump 70 years forward with me for a moment.

After the Oakey family had left Melbourne for Nottingham, and after the congregation on Penn Lane had moved to a brand new chapel at nearby Castle Donington, this little registry book became part of the public record when it was requested on November 3, 1838 by "The Commissioners for Inquiring onto the State, Custody, and Authenticity of Non-parochial Registers." The record book was submitted to them under the signatures of John Green, who had kept it "since the removal of the late minister" and of Thomas Pass, trustee. Thomas was the then 65 year old brother of Elizabeth Pass. A microfilmed copy of this book now resides at the genealogical library in Salt Lake City. My studies of its contents will provide an outline for the rest of this chapter.

Now back to 1768.

The first page of the book states, "This Book belongs to the Independent Church of Protestant Dissenters, meeting at Melbourne in the County of Derby."

The first christening was recorded April 19, 1768. The second was not until February 20, 1770. Both were children of Samuel and Jane Tomlinson from Derby Hills, just north of Melbourne. Only one more child's name appeared in the book until October 9, 1770 when Elizabeth Pass, the first child from Melbourne, and a boy named Joseph Scott were christened.

Elizabeth's brother Thomas Pass was christened at Penn Lane February 28, 1773. There were four more that year, and then only two in 1774. In 1775 Elizabeth's sister Mary Pass was christened there. So was her cousin Mary Pass, daughter of William. There were three more christenings in 1776 followed by another two year gap. After that, over the next 15

years the congregation averaged six christenings per year. About a dozen of these were for siblings or cousins of Elizabeth Pass. By comparison, the Anglican Church in Melbourne was averaging 26 christenings per year. The other dissenting church in Melbourne, the Baptists, were performing about five baptisms by immersion in the Trent River each year. In addition to the baptism records I was able to find a complete membership roll for that Baptists in 1770. They had 238 members, some of them named Pass. From this data, I calculate that the Independent congregation in Penn Lane had about 300 members including several Pass families.

In the year 1777 the Trent and Mersey canal was completed at Shardlow, which opened new trade for Melbourne and the surrounding towns and villages with the western port of Liverpool, and created a waterway that connected both coasts of England.

Sometime in 1782 a new minister named Joseph Griffiths arrived in Melbourne to officiate at Penn Lane. He recorded christenings on July 8th and 16th that year. One was for a visitor from London and the other child was from nearby Ticknall. I think that Reverend Griffiths was just visiting Melbourne at that time, possibly fresh out of divinity school. He was born 40 miles SE of Melbourne in Walsall, Staffordshore on September 3, 1751, so he would have been 30 years old. He soon married a woman named Jane Mansfield, whom he must have known growing up, since she was from the village of Bushbury, just seven miles away from Walsall. They were married at Greasley, Nottinghamshire on September 5, 1782, 20 miles north of Melbourne. I think the couple moved directly to Melbourne after their honeymoon was over, for he began christening children there on a regular basis after that. There were 10 recorded for 1784. One of these was his own daughter, Jane Griffiths, who was christened by Thomas Hall, who had also filled in for Rev. Griffiths the previous December. Joseph Griffiths would serve as pastor in Melbourne for 11 years.

King George III's Stamp Act for Churches was passed October 1, 1783. Like the infamous Stamp Act of 1765 on legal and other documents, which so vexed the Colonies and led to the American Revolution, this was another attempt at regulation and taxation. Stamps for all births or baptisms, marriages, and funerals were to be purchased at the rate of three pence, which the preachers were authorized to collect from the families with a penalty of £5 for omission. Official forms were required for the recording of christenings with fields for the birthdate, christening date, parents' names, and the name of the officiator. Three pence was a high price for some,[17] but the new forms make much easier work for genealogists.

1784 was an extremely cold weather year. That was also the year when John Wesley and George Whitefield finally broke off from the Anglican Church for good, founding

[17]I calculate 3 pence in 1800 were equal to 500 pence in 2020. Since there are 81 pence in a U.S. dollar, the charge would be about $6 in today's American currency. Since there are 100 pence per pound, the £5 penalty would have been equivalent to $200.

Methodism. It was also the year in which Catherine Allen, James Oakey's future wife was born in Castle Donington. More on that soon.

Great famines were experienced in Europe during 1788 and 1789. These hard times helped to ignite the French Revolution, and they were surely felt in Melbourne. It was during that time on December 15, 1788 that Joseph Oakey Jr., framework knitter, married Elizabeth Pass in Melbourne in the old Anglican Church, although both of them came from dissenting families. Joseph signed his own name; Elizabeth signed with an x. The couple was married by Joseph Turner, the curate (assistant vicar) of Aston. I don't know whether he was just filling in for John Middleton, the regular vicar at Melbourne, or the couple had some connection to that town just across the Trent River. One of the witnesses to the ceremony was Mary Lester, probably a friend of Elizabeth's, who was married there a year later.

Joseph Oakey and Elizabeth Pass raised a family of eleven children in Melbourne.

Their oldest was my 3rd great grandfather, James Oakey, Sr., the stocking weaver, who moved his family to Nottingham around 1827.[18] James[19] was born on a Friday, March 9, 1789, during the beginning of the French Revolution.[20] Ann Oakey was born the next year, and Mary Oakey in 1791. The next year, William Oakey was born. Interestingly, none of these first four children was christened in the Penn Lane Chapel, in fact I have no christening record for any of them. Perhaps Joseph and Elizabeth were not yet committed to the Independent congregation. As an adult, James reported in the 1851 census that he had been born in Melbourne as did Ann. But Mary was born in nearby Castle Donington. Perhaps the family moved there briefly for work. William did not survive long enough to be included in a census, so I don't know when the family returned to Melbourne, but it was before 1796, since the rest of the children were all born and christened there.

On May 16, 1793 the Reverend Joseph Griffiths performed his last christening in Penn Lane. He was only 41, so I assume that he just moved on to another congregation. There would be no more christenings in the Independent chapel until that December, when a Reverend John Smith, age 28 and single, christened a child named John Moore. Christenings at Penn Lane Chapel were sporadic during the next two years, suggesting no one had replaced Rev. Griffiths as full time pastor. Reverend Smith returned to Penn Lane Chapel in June, October, and November 1794 for three more christenings, and two in March and April, 1795. There were no more for over a year.

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[18] Refer to the Letters of Lace and Stones book, chapter 13, page 142.
[19] James and four of his 10 subsequent siblings were named after Joseph and his four siblings. In turn, James named six of his own seven children after his own siblings and self.
[20] On that day, the French Second Assembly of Notables was preparing its *Cahiers de Doléances* (lists of grievances) and elections to the Estates General.

Elizabeth's father John Pass died in Melbourne on January 11th. He was 51.

On May 22, 1796 another visiting pastor, the Reverend, John Dawson, christened a group of three children. The following week, Reverend John Smith came to live in Melbourne and began to do all the christening on a regular basis. He proved to be the longest serving minister of the chapel on Penn Lane. Since there are so many men named John Smith, it is hard for a genealogist to distinguish between them. However, there is some evidence that this young pastor may have been a local boy. The birth and baptism records of the local Baptist congregation show that a twelve year old John Smith from the nearby Ticknall group, was baptized in the Trent River on September 14, 1777. He had been born August 19, 1765 in Breedon, just 2.7 miles south of Melbourne. It is not hard to imagine that he went away to a dissenting ministry school, and then found a job in his home territory.

Joseph and Elizabeth's fourth child, one month old Elizabeth, was their first to be christened at Penn Lane Chapel on June 5, 1796. All the rest would be christened there.

On May 7, 1798 Thomas Pass, Elizabeth's younger brother, married Mary Turton, who had been christened an Anglican. He was 25; she was 24. They were both able to sign their names. His sister Mary was witness and signed with an x. Thomas and Mary's children were all christened at Penn Lane. Their first, Dorothy, died at the age of seven and their second, Sarah, died at age two. The next three survived to adulthood. As mentioned earlier, Thomas was one of the trustees of Penn Lane Chapel in 1838. At the time of the 1841 census the family was still living in Melbourne. Thomas was a 65 year old farmer. Their three adult children were living with them. Thomas, 35, was a grocer, chemist, and hosier on Potter street, John, 30, a wheelwright, and a second Dorothy, 25 a shop worker. Thomas died at age 74 in Melbourne in 1847. After that Mary moved in with Dorothy and her husband Thomas Johnson in Tamworth, Warwickshire, 20 miles north and died in 1851.

Mary Pass, Elizabeth's 22 year old sister, married John Wood in 1798. He was from Duffield, north of Derby. They lived at first in Melbourne, their seven girls all being christened at Penn Lane. Then when the girls were still teenagers, they all (except one named Hannah, who died as a five-month-old) moved to Milford in the Duffield area where John worked as a cotton knitter. The North Midland Railway passed through the area in 1840. Milford was a tiny town, but had a Unitarian Chapel and a girls' school.

1799 was an extremely cold weather year in England, but it heralded a fertile time for the Pass and Oakey families, whose second generation began to fill the Penn Lane Chapel's christening registry. During the next eight years Joseph and Elizabeth Oakey attended christenings for seven nieces and nephews and for four of their own children, John, Dorothy, Joseph, and a second Elizabeth. In 1803, their first Elizabeth died at the age of 12.

The year 1805 was significant for the Oakey and Pass families in ways that they could not possibly comprehend at the time. The year brought no christenings or marriages for them, but history was happening. In America, Thomas Jefferson was sworn in for a second term

as President of the United States on March 4th. A month later in Vienna, Beethoven premiered his third Symphony, Eroica, in Vienna, conducting it himself. On May 26th Napoleon was crowned King of Italy. In July an earthquake in Compania, Italy killed 5,573 people. On November 7th Lewis and Clark arrived at the Pacific Ocean. And most significant for the Oakeys, Joseph Smith, the American prophet, was born December 23rd in Sharon, Vermont.

A year later Grandma Pass (Dorothy Grundy Pass) died at the age of 57 and was buried on November 4, 1806.

On August 3, 1807 the young Reverend John Smith married Hannah Hulse, a 25 year old from Loughborough. The wedding was held, as the law required, in the St. Michael and St. Mary Anglican Church.[21] They soon produced a son, whom they named after his father, who christened him on March 10, 1809.

A month later, Jane Oakey, Joseph and Elizabeth's 10th child was christened.

On August 13, 1809 their oldest child James married Catherine Allen of Castle Donington. She is an interesting character. She was the seventh of eight children, having assumed the name of an older sister, who had died as a three-year-old. Her mother died when Catherine was two, and the seven children ranging from one to 19 years old, were raised by a stepmother. When Catherine was 20 she got into a marriage with a 27 year old man from neighboring Breedon-on-the-Hill named John Curzon, which did not work out. After their son John was born, they split up. There is no record of a divorce, but both eventually re-married. Her ex-husband became a distinguished lawyer in Derby with an office on the Full Street and a big house full of servants. He evidently remained single until he was 50, when he married Rosalind Martha Hope, who was the daughter of a minister and 22 years younger than he. They had seven more children together including a boy who became a minister himself.

Catherine was five years older than James Oakey, who was just 20, and she brought her two year old child, John Curzon, into the family. James and Catherine's first child, Mary Oakey, was born March 8, 1811.

1811 was a year of Luddite[22] violence against framework knitting machines and their owners, especially in Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. I wonder how that might have affected Joseph and his son James in their work. At this point Joseph was in his working prime at 46 and James was 22. I suspect they may have been in the business together.

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[21] It is also possible that the bride was 21 year old Hannah Toone of Derby Hills, on Feb 29, 1808, leap day.

[22] Luddites were a terrorist group, who felt threatened by the industrial revolution and made raids on factories and particularly knitting machines.

On July 17th of that year three Oakey children were christened on the same day at Penn Lane. James and Catherine brought their first baby Mary, an infant, and Catherine's son John Curzon, who was now five years old. Joseph and Elizabeth brought their last child, Lydia, who was actually two months younger than her niece Mary.

That was the last time Rev. John Smith christened anyone in Melbourne for about six years. He was off to Wirksworth, Derbyshire, 21 miles to the north. For the next three years, seven different visiting ministers including John Smith himself came to perform christenings periodically at Penn Lane. During that time James and Catherine had two more children, Catherine (Kitty), in 1813 and William in 1815, but they did not have them christened promptly, I suspect because of the instability of their congregation.

England's War of 1812 with the United States ended February 18, 1815. On March 20th Napoleon, who had escaped from Elba, entered Paris with a regular army of 140,000 troops and a volunteer force of 200,000 to begin his Hundred Days Rule. Mt. Tambura erupted in Indonesia in April of 1815, killing over 92,000 people and causing "The year without summer" by pouring volcanic ash into the atmosphere of the entire world.

There was no regular minister at Penn Lane chapel that year or for the next two. The Reverend William Pritchard filled in on June 25th by baptizing nine children of ages up to five years old and five more on October 15th including Martha and Hannah Wood, two of Elizabeth Oakey's nieces. Reverend John Smith was back by April, 1817, and would stay in Melbourne until 1823, when he had completed 24 years of service.

On June 21, 1817 James Oakey Jr. was born to James and Catherine. He was their fourth child and as an adult became one of the pioneers of Bear Lake Valley, Idaho.

Six Oakey siblings and cousins were christened in one day by Reverend Smith at the Penn Lane Chapel the following year, filling a half page of the registry: James, Catherine, and William, the unbaptized children of James and Catherine, their cousins Mary and Jane Lakin, and Sidney Pickering.

The following March, Joseph and Elizabeth Oakey lost their second Elizabeth. She was 12.

For some reason, there were only two christenings at Penn Lane in all of 1819, both on the same day, and only five in 1820, three of these in one session. I wonder what was happening in the congregation. Reverend Smith was apparently still around, for in 1821 he performed seven christenings.

Surprisingly, on February 18, 1821 Catherine Allen Oakey went to St. Michael and St. Mary's Church and was baptized an Anglican at the age of 35. She had already been baptized as an infant at Castle Donington on December 14, 1784, but that may have been in a dissenting chapel. Apparently she had some sort of falling out with the dissenters at Penn Lane. Or with Reverend Smith. Or possibly with the Oakey in-laws. A year later, she had her baby girl Elizabeth (Bessey) baptized an Anglican as well.

In 1822 there were 10 christenings at Penn Lane including two more Pickering boys, John and William, Catherine and James' nephews through his sister, Mary. However, the fourth Pickering boy, Thomas, would later be baptized an Anglican. During 1823 there were fifteen christenings at Penn Lane, including two Pass cousins. The Independent congregation seemed to be back in business, but not for long. After August 10, there were no more christenings for two years. John Smith either left town or perhaps died. Because of his ultra-common name I was unable to trace him.

It was two more years before Independent christenings resumed under a Reverend John Elleby, who was in Melbourne until August 22, 1828. Apparently Independent church services ceased in Melbourne about that time. That was when the registry book fell into the hands of John Green and Thomas Pass, trustees. The building was razed in 1871. I don't know whether in the meantime it was taken over by another congregation or simply stood empty. In 70 years of its existence, the Penn Lane congregation had only three ministers that stayed at least three years, and 16 total. The Pass family was involved from beginning to end. Of the 360 infant baptisms performed there, about ten percent were for Pass, Wood, Pickering or Oakey children. Pass is the most frequent of all the names to appear in the record. There were 22 families with four or more christenings, who seemed to the backbone of the group.

Joseph Oakey Jr. died in Melbourne on March 21, 1827 at the age of 62. His wife Elizabeth in April of 1829.

Apparently during the decline of the congregation in Melbourne, many members began traveling the five miles to join the growing Independent congregation at Castle Donington. From Joseph Oakey's death until August 21, 1838 only seven more christenings were recorded in Penn Lane Chapel, performed by three different ministers on only five occasions.

I learned that the Independent congregation in Castle Donington purchased a vacant factory building in 1837 and fitted it out as a church for worship, employing ministers in rotation from across the county for services.[23] Then in 1840 they built a proper chapel in Clapgun Street with the capacity to seat 285 worshipers. It seems that this group grew at the expense of the congregation at Melbourne.

Sadly, the congregation at Castle Donington also declined during the following decades. On "Census Sunday" in 1851, only 67 people attended the morning service at the Independent Chapel in Clapgun Street, and 142 in the evening. That church closed in 1858-9. It is possible that the drop in attendance was not just a problem for the Congregationalists, but a more general decline in religious interest. That same Sunday the Anglican Church of St Edward, King and Martyr reported an unimpressive attendance of 173 for morning service and 202 that evening. The population of Castle Donington that year was 3,028. Most of the

[23] Pamela J. Fisher and J.M. Lee, *The Victoria History of Leicestershire, Castle Donington*, University of London, 2016.

"dissenting" churchgoers at the present time in Castle Donington are Baptists.[24] If there was such a general decline in the churches throughout England, it may have set the scene for the impressive success of Mormon missionaries during that period.

I wish that I could determine exactly when the James Oakey family left Melbourne to settle in Nottingham. It would have been after Bessie's Anglican baptism in Melbourne the summer of 1822 and before 1828, when their oldest daughter Mary married an unstable Irishman[25] named James Matthews, almost certainly in Nottingham. I can't find a marriage record for them, but according to the census, their oldest boy was born in 1829.

If James and Catherine left town for family reasons, it could have been at the early part of that interval--I can't imagine that Elizabeth Pass Oakey was happy that Catherine and her daughter converted to the Church of England. An economic argument could be made that the move was in 1827 following Joseph Oakey's death. It seems likely that Joseph and his son James had worked together in their trade of weaving cotton and silk stockings on a frame, described in marriage and census documents as F. W. K. (framework knitters.) Joseph's passing may have freed James to look for a better professional situation for himself or an apprenticeship in lacemaking for his sons, William and James, who were then 12 and 10 years old.

Stocking frame used in home production

In the mid 1700's there were about 1,800 weaving frames in use in England, mostly in the midland counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire, where the Oakeys lived. Due to the fashions of the period, there was a huge market for men's cotton hose. In the early 1800's styles changed, driving the market from cotton to silk net for women's hose, and to lacemaking. At first this work was mostly done at home, utilizing the entire family for the different tasks in the process. But with the industrial revolution Nottingham was becoming a center for steam-powered knitting machines, especially for lace making, and was drawing knitters, called "twist hands," from the surrounding counties. Between 1820 and 1825 the bobbin-net lace trade in Nottingham enjoyed a period of unparalleled prosperity. Wages for machine operatives were very good for the time, ranging from £5-10 a week.[26] They called it "twist net fever." The boom drew people from all the surrounding counties.

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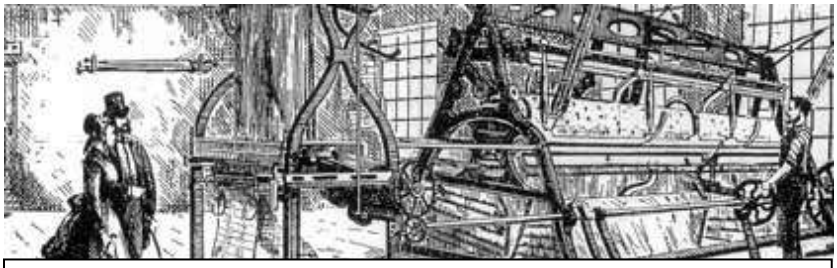
[24]The nearest LDS church today is in Toton, eight miles away.

[25] Check out his story in *Letters of Lace and Stones,* pages 184 and 275.

[26] J. M. Lee, *The Rise and Fall of a Market Town, Castle Donington in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 59.)



Steam-driven Lace Machine from mid-1800s

Lace making machines weighed around 20 tons and could only be operated by adult males, though boys began training as apprentices around the age of 12, graduating about seven years later. The machines produced huge rolls of cotton or silk that could be up to 420 inches wide and 50 yards long. The great machines were lubricated by "black lead" (graphite, as in lead pencils), and the men would return from work each day looking like coal miners. By 1850 about 8,000 men were employed at these machines around Nottingham, but there were as many or more women in the industry doing the finishing, including mending defects in the material, bleaching out the graphite, and cutting the material into usable sizes ranging from one inch edging to curtains, tablecloths, hat veils, and shawls.[27]

So, assuming that the year was 1827, James Oakey would have been 38 years old when he moved his wife Catherine and six children ages 8-16 from Melbourne, Derbyshire, twenty miles down the Trent River to Nottingham. I do not know for sure whether John Curzon Jr. was with them. He would have been 20 years old by then, if still alive. After his christening at Penn Lane Chapel in 1811, I have been able to find no trace of him. My only clue is that his father, John Curzon Sr. had named his first son from his second marriage John in 1828. The fact that he would use that name again suggests to me that his first son might no longer be needing it.

The industrial revolution was revolutionizing the weaving trade, and Nottingham was pioneering the steam-driven looms. The Trent River was navigable from Nottingham clear to the North Sea, and the city was fast becoming a major player in lacemaking.[28] The two Oakey sons, William and James Oakey Jr., would soon become apprentice lace makers, and so eventually would James' grandson, Thomas.

James Oakey's mother, Elizabeth Pass, remained in Melbourne. She was 57 and died two years later. Some of James' younger siblings were still living at home with Elizabeth. Ann, the oldest, was already a widow with two daughters, ages 10 and 11, and they may also have been living with Elizabeth. Ann's older girl, Mary Lakin, would eventually move to Nottingham and marry her first cousin, William Oakey, the oldest son of James Oakey Sr.

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[27] Sheila A. Mason, BBC website, bbc.com.

[28] For this story, check out *Letters of Lace and Stones: Oakeys and Sirrines, Two Families Joined and Separated by Pioneering and Polygamy,* Memories section for James Oakey K2HM-XQ6, Chapter 13, p. 143.

Joseph and Elizabeth's second daughter, Mary Pickering, was 33. Her four boys were by then ages 3-12 and she had an infant daughter named Jemima, who was one of the last children to be christened in the Penn Lane Chapel. Her husband John worked as a frame smith in the weaving industry. They eventually moved to Castle Donington, and later to Nottingham.

Elizabeth's son William had moved to Barbados. I know very little about him, but surmise that he had gone there in the military. Barbados is a 14 x 21 mile island in the Caribbean about 300 miles from Venezuela. Originally discovered by Columbus in the late 1400s, it was settled in 1625 by the British and became a rich sugar colony and the center of the English slave trade. The slave trade was abolished by Parliament in 1807, but the slaves in Barbados were not immediately emancipated. In 1816, the so-called Bussa's (slave) Rebellion was suppressed by British troops. At that time William would have been 24 years old. My guess is that he went there as a soldier or sailor and never returned. I could find no record that he married, either in England or in Barbados. I know that he was there only through letters sent many years later to James Oakey Jr. in America by his relatives. According to the letters, William never came back to England and died on the island in 1825. He was one of three children of Elizabeth and Joseph who had died by then. Their first Elizabeth had died 24 years earlier in Melbourne, when she was seven years old and their second Elizabeth had died there at the age of 12 in 1819.

Elizabeth's son John, who was born in 1800, was no longer in Melbourne. According to a letter written decades later by his nephew William Oakey in 1885 to James Oakey Jr., in Paris, Idaho, "Uncle John had a son named John before he was married. The boy lived in Sneinton and worked as a baker." This suggests that John may have left town after getting into trouble as a teenager, and that at some point he was married, but had no other children except the illegitimate boy. There is a marriage record for a John Oakey in Radford, Nottinghamshire on December 13, 1829 who married a young woman named Ann Savage. There is no way to know for sure whether this is our John. If it was, he was likely in touch with his brother James in Nottingham.

Dorothy was 24, single, and living at home when James and family left Melbourne. She would marry in 1830 and have three kids before her husband Thomas Parker died. A year later she married George Garrett and had three more children.

Joseph Oakey had married at age 18 and left the home two years earlier. I have not been able to document the marriage nor the name of his wife. His nephew William Oakey reported in 1885 that Uncle Joseph and his wife had no children.

Jane was 18 and probably living at home with her mother. She would later marry Thomas Magee and move to Derby. They had four kids before she died in Warwickshire at the age of 35. Lydia, age 16 was also at home with Elizabeth. She married Barnabas Lowndes in Derby when she was 36. When her big brother James Oakey Sr. was an old widower and too sick to travel to Zion, her nephew William took him to her home, where she and her husband took care of him until he died.

After arriving in Nottingham, James and Catherine established a comfortable home at Prospect Place. It was the first house in Lenton Row in Hyson Green. Their grandson Thomas Oakey described it as "...a large nice house with a yard and a large garden and a square grass plot and a lilac tree in the middle on which I used to play."[29] It was located on the border of a nearby village called Lenton. The neighborhood was soon annexed into Nottingham, which had exploded beyond its traditional borders when the Enclosure Acts began to free up farmland for houses and steam-driven lace factories to allow the severely overcrowded city to expand.

Meanwhile in America, another young religious group was preparing the scene for another change in the life of the Oakeys. In 1830, Joseph Smith organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the state of New York. Missionaries were sent out immediately in America, but it was not until July 20, 1837 that the first Mormon missionaries arrived in Liverpool. In March, 1840, a Mormon apostle, Wilfred Woodruff, converted an entire congregation called the United Brethren to the new church. The next year, leather bound copies of the Book of Mormon were presented to Queen Victoria and the church continued to grow rapidly in England.

I know little of the religious life of James and Catherine Oakey during that time. I suspect that Catherine remained an Anglican, since their grandson Thomas wrote in 1847 that his father took him to Anglican services. That year James Jr. and his young family were living with his parents at Prospect Place when he met a young Mormon traveling elder named John Lees. Nothing came of that encounter, but three years later young James Oakey was baptized a Mormon in the nearby Trent River. In the following weeks, James had his four children blessed by the elders. His wife Mary was baptized a month later, and on June 24, 1850, his father James Oakey Sr. was baptized a Mormon. It took almost a year for Catherine to join him, but she too became a Mormon on May 21, 1851.

By 1850, the British membership of the church had risen to 30,747 members, which was more than the total membership in the United States, including 7,500 Brits who had already immigrated.

As far as I can determine, no other family members of Catherine and James Sr. joined the Mormons except her granddaughter Rosie Matthews, who joined the family of James Jr. after her mother Mary died in 1859. Catherine and James Sr.'s oldest son, William, was critical of Mormons for the rest of his life and never gave up trying to bring his parents and brother back to their former faith.

James Jr. and his family immigrated to Utah in 1862 and 1863 and never returned to England. James Sr. and Catherine were left behind to come at a later date, but never made it. Catherine died November 26, 1862 in Radford, a part of Nottingham. James Sr.

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[29] *Letters of Lace and Stones* p. 146.

remained loyal to the Mormon Church for the rest of his life, but his health did not permit the crossing to America. He died April 23, 1873 at the home of their youngest daughter Lydia Lowndes in Derby, attended by members of the local Mormon branch there.

And here my story ends, but not the Oakeys' story.[30]

[30]For that I refer you to my previous work, *Letters of Lace and Stones, Oakeys and Sirrines, Two Families Joined and Separated by Pioneering and Polygamy,* Memories, Familysearch.com.